

Message Text

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PAGE 01 STATE 028201
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S/S - MR. BRID

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FM SECSTATE WASHDC
TO AMEMBASSY GEORGETOWN PRIORITY

C O N F I D E N T I A L STATE 028201

EXDIS

E.O. 11652:GDS

TAGS: PFOR, GY

SUBJECT: SECRETARY'S MEETING WITH GUYANESE AMBASSADOR MANN

1. SUMMARY: IN FEBRUARY 7 MEETING GUYANESE AMBASSADOR MANN AND THE SECRETARY EXCHANGED HOPES FOR IMPROVED RELATIONS AND AGREED THAT THE SECRETARY AND FOREIGN MINISTER WILLS WILL TRY TO ARRANGE A MEETING SOMETIME IN MARCH/APRIL. MANN REITERATED FIRM ASSURANCES THAT BOTH GOG AND PNC WILL AVOID SUPPORT OF PUERTO RICAN SOCIALIST PARTY. ACCORDING MANN, PRIME MINISTER BURNHAM'S HEALTH IMPROVING, BUT IT MAY TAKE LONGER THAN TWO/THREE WEEKS FOR BURNHAM TO RETURN TO HIS DUTIES. MANN OFFERED GOG ASSISTANCE IN ANY U.S. INITIATIVES VIS-A-VIS CUBA AND AFRICA, SUGGESTED INCREASED US/GUYANA CULTURAL CONTACTS, AND URGED U.S. "INTEREST" IN MAZARUNI HYDROELECTRIC PROJECT. END SUMMARY.

2. THE SECRETARY MET WITH GUYANESE AMBASSADOR MANN
CONFIDENTIAL

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PAGE 02 STATE 028201

FEBRUARY 7 AT MANN'S REQUEST. MANN OPENED BY EXPRESSING HOPE OF GOG FOREIGN MINISTER WILLS FOR IMPROVED RELATIONS AND WILLS' REQUEST FOR A MEETING WITH THE SECRETARY SOMETIME IN MARCH/APRIL. THE SECRETARY RESPONDED THAT HE HOPED VERY MUCH FOR AN IMPROVED CLIMATE IN OUR RELATIONS AND WOULD BE DELIGHTED TO MEET WITH WILLS SOMETIME AFTER HIS RETURN FROM THE MIDDLE EAST.

3. MANN STRESSED THAT GOG IS ENGAGED IN A SOCIALIST EXPERIMENT, PIONEERING A STRATEGY IN "COOPERATIVE SOCIALISM" BUT WITH NO INTENTION OF EXPORTING ITS IDEOLOGY OR MAKING THREATENING ALLIANCES WITH OTHER SOCIALIST COUNTRIES. HE OBSERVED IN THIS CONTEXT THAT THE POSSIBILITY OF A NEW U.S./CUBA DIALOGUE ENCOURAGES THE GOG, BECAUSE GUYANA, CUBA, JAMAICA AND PANAMA AS PART OF "ONE SYNDROME" IF THE U.S. HAS BETTER RELATIONS WITH CUBA "PERHAPS THE WARMTH WILL SPREAD TO GUYANA".

4. IN RESPONSE TO AN EXPRESSION OF CONCERN BY THE SECRETARY ABOUT BURNHAM'S HEALTH, MANN SAID THE "HONEST ANSWER IS I DON'T KNOW". HE THEN ADDED THAT BURNHAM'S HEALTH HAS IMPROVED, "BUT IT HAS NOT IMPROVED DECISIVELY AND IT MAY BE LONGER THAN TWO OR THREE WEEKS BEFORE HE RETURNS TO WORK".

5. MANN REITERATED GOG DECISION AGAINST ANY OFFICIAL GOG OR PARTY CONNECTION WITH PUERTO RICAN SOCIALISTS. HE SAID PUERTO RICAN PEOPLE MADE CLEAR CHOICE IN NOVEMBER AND GOG RESPECTS IT. HE ADDED THAT HE HAD FURTHER ASSURANCES ON THIS POINT "THIS MORNING".

6. IN CONTEXT OF PUERTO RICAN ISSUE, AMBASSADOR TODMAN COMMENTED THAT STATEMENTS MADE FOR DOMESTIC POLITICAL OPINION IN OTHER COUNTRIES OFTEN HAVE IMPORTANT ECHOES HERE. THOSE ECHOES IN TURN CAN INFLUENCE OUR CONGRESSIONAL OPINION, AND LIMIT THE ABILITY OF THE CONFIDENTIAL

CONFIDENTIAL

PAGE 03 STATE 028201

ADMINISTRATION TO ACT. AMBASSADOR TODMAN STRESSED OUR HOPE THAT WE COULD FIND A WAY TO KEEP THE DECIBEL LEVEL DOWN ON MATTERS ON WHICH WE DISAGREE.

7. MANN RAISED TWO SUBJECTS AS HIS PERSONAL SUGGESTIONS, SAYING HE WAS NOT INSTRUCTED OR AUTHORIZED TO DISCUSS THEM. FIRST WAS NEED MANN PERCEIVES FOR EXPANDED U.S. CULTURAL CONTACT WITH GUYANA, WHICH IS A COUNTRY STILL "FIRMLY IN U.S. CULTURAL ORBIT". SECOND WAS HOPE FOR SOME EXPRESSION OF U.S. "INTEREST" IN MAZARUNI HYDRO POWER PROJECT. MANN OBSERVED MAZARUNI PROJECT IS "ALMOST AN OBSESSION" WITH HIS GOVERNMENT AND "THE KEY TO OUR DEVELOPMENT STRATEGY".

8. SECRETARY RESPONDED ON THE HYDROELECTRIC PROJECT BY SAYING THAT HE WOULD LIKE TO INFORM HIMSELF FURTHER ABOUT THE MATTER. AMBASSADOR TODMAN OBSERVED THAT WE SHOULD NOT LOOK AT THE MATTER SIMPLY IN TERMS OF MAKING A GESTURE, BECAUSE WE DO NOT WANT TO RAISE ANY FALSE HOPES.

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